

SUBCHAPTER B—NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

PARTS 1116–1147 [RESERVED]

PART 1148—PROCEDURES FOR DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)

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§ 1148.1 What is the purpose and scope of these regulations?

This part contains the rules that the Arts Endowment follows in processing requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552. These rules should be read in conjunction with the text of the FOIA and the Uniform Freedom of Information Fee Schedule and Guidelines published by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Guidelines). Requests made by individuals for records about themselves under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, are processed in accordance with the Arts Endowment's Privacy Act regulations as well as under this part.

§ 1148.2 How will the Arts Endowment make proactive disclosures?

Records that the Arts Endowment makes available for public inspection

in an electronic format may be accessed through the Arts Endowment's open government page, available at <https://www.arts.gov/open>. The Arts Endowment will determine which of its records should be made publicly available, identify additional records of interest to the public that are appropriate for public disclosure, and post and index such records. The Arts Endowment will ensure that its website of posted records and indices is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.

§ 1148.3 How can I make a FOIA request?

(a) *General information.* To make a request for records, a requester should write directly to the Arts Endowment at National Endowment for the Arts, Office of General Counsel, 400 7th St. SW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20506. Requests may also be sent by facsimile to the General Counsel's office at (202) 682-5572, or by email to foia@arts.gov.

(b) *Identity requirements.* Depending on the type of document you ask for, the Arts Endowment may require verification of your identity or the identity of a third party.

(1) A requester who is making a request for records about himself or herself must comply with the Arts Endowment's verification requirements as set forth in § 1159.9 of this chapter.

(2) Where a request for records pertains to another individual, a requester may receive greater access by submitting either a notarized authorization signed by that individual or a declaration made in compliance with the requirements set forth in 28 U.S.C. 1746 by that individual authorizing disclosure of the records to the requester, or by submitting proof that the individual is deceased (e.g., a copy of a death certificate or an obituary). As an exercise of administrative discretion, the Arts Endowment may require a requester to supply additional information if necessary in order to verify that a particular individual has consented to disclosure.

(c) *Description of records sought.* Requesters must describe the records

sought in sufficient detail to enable Arts Endowment personnel to locate them with a reasonable amount of effort. To the extent possible, requesters should include specific information that may help the Arts Endowment identify the requested records, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient, subject matter of the record, case number, file designation, or reference number. Before submitting their requests, requesters may contact the Arts Endowment's designated FOIA contact or FOIA Public Liaison to discuss the records they seek and to receive assistance in describing the records. Contact information for the Arts Endowment's designated FOIA contact and FOIA Public Liaison is available on the Arts Endowment's FOIA website (<https://www.arts.gov/foia-contacts>), or can be obtained by calling (202) 682-54184. If after receiving a request, the Arts Endowment determines that it does not reasonably describe the records sought, the Arts Endowment will inform the requester what additional information is needed or why the request is otherwise insufficient. Requesters who are attempting to reformulate or modify such a request may discuss their request with the Arts Endowment's designated FOIA contact or FOIA Public Liaison. If a request does not reasonably describe the records sought, the Arts Endowment's response to the request may be delayed.

(d) *Format specifications.* Requests may specify the preferred form or format (including electronic formats) for the records you seek. The Arts Endowment will accommodate your request if the record is readily reproducible in that form or format.

(e) *Contact information requirements.* Requesters must provide contact information, such as their phone number, email address, and/or mailing address, to assist the Arts Endowment in communicating with them and providing released records.

§ 1148.4 How will the Arts Endowment respond to my request?

(a) *In general.* In determining which records are responsive to a request, the Arts Endowment ordinarily will include only records in its possession as

of the date that it begins its search. If any other date is used, the Arts Endowment will inform the requester of that date. A record that is excluded from the requirements of the FOIA pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(c), is not considered responsive to a request.

(b) *Authority to grant or deny requests.* The Arts Endowment Chairperson or his/her designee is authorized to grant or to deny any requests for records that are maintained by the Arts Endowment.

(c) *Consultation and referral.* When reviewing records located by the Arts Endowment in response to a request, the Arts Endowment will determine whether another agency of the Federal Government is better able to determine whether the record is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA. As to any such record, the Arts Endowment will proceed in one of the following ways:

(1) *Consultation.* When records originated with the Arts Endowment, but contain within them information of interest to another agency or other Federal Government office, the Arts Endowment will typically consult with that other entity prior to making a release determination.

(2) *Referral.* (i) When the Arts Endowment believes that a different agency is best able to determine whether to disclose the record, the Arts Endowment typically should refer the responsibility for responding to the request regarding that record to that agency. Ordinarily, the agency that originated the record is presumed to be the best agency to make the disclosure determination. However, if the Arts Endowment and the originating agency jointly agree that the Arts Endowment is in the best position to respond regarding the record, then the record may be handled as a consultation.

(ii) Whenever the Arts Endowment refers any part of the responsibility for responding to a request to another agency, it will document the referral, maintain a copy of the record that it refers, and notify the requester of the referral, informing the requester of the name(s) of the agency to which the record was referred, including that agency's FOIA contact information.

(d) *Timing of responses to consultations and referrals.* The Arts Endowment will

consider a FOIA request to be a perfected FOIA request if it complies with this section. All consultations and referrals received by the Arts Endowment will be handled in the order of the date that the first agency received the perfected FOIA request.

(e) *Agreements regarding consultations and referrals.* The Arts Endowment may establish agreements with other agencies to eliminate the need for consultations or referrals with respect to particular types of records.

§ 1148.5 When will the Arts Endowment respond to my request?

(a) *In general.* The Arts Endowment ordinarily will respond to requests according to their order of receipt.

(b) *Multitrack processing.* The Arts Endowment will designate a specific track for requests that are granted expedited processing, in accordance with the standards set forth in paragraph (e) of this section. The Arts Endowment may also designate additional processing tracks that distinguish between simple and more complex requests based on the estimated amount of work or time needed to process the request. Among the factors the Arts Endowment may consider are the number of records requested, the number of pages involved in processing the request and the need for consultations or referrals. The Arts Endowment will advise requesters of the track into which their request falls and, when appropriate, will offer the requesters an opportunity to narrow or modify their request so that it can be placed in a different processing track.

(c) *Unusual circumstances.* Whenever the Arts Endowment cannot meet the statutory time limit for processing a request because of “unusual circumstances,” as defined in the FOIA, and the Arts Endowment extends the time limit on that basis, the Arts Endowment will, before expiration of the 20 business day period to respond, notify the requester in writing of the unusual circumstances involved and of the date by which the Arts Endowment estimates processing of the request will be completed. Where the extension exceeds 10 working days, the Arts Endowment will, as described by the FOIA, provide the requester with an oppor-

tunity to modify the request or arrange an alternative time period for processing the original or modified request. The Arts Endowment will make available its designated FOIA contact or FOIA Public Liaison for this purpose. The Arts Endowment will also alert requesters to the availability of the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to provide dispute resolution services.

(d) *Aggregating requests.* To satisfy unusual circumstances under the FOIA, the Arts Endowment may aggregate requests in cases where it reasonably appears that multiple requests, submitted either by a requester or by a group of requesters acting in concert, constitute a single request that would otherwise involve unusual circumstances. The Arts Endowment will not aggregate multiple requests that involve unrelated matters.

(e) *Expedited processing.* Consistent with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(E)(i), the Arts Endowment may grant expedited processing under certain circumstances:

(1) The Arts Endowment will process requests and appeals on an expedited basis whenever it is determined that they involve:

(i) Circumstances in which the lack of expedited processing could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; or

(ii) An urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal Government activity, if made by a person who is primarily engaged in disseminating information.

(2) A request for expedited processing may be made at any time. Requests based on paragraphs (e)(1)(i) and (ii) of this section must be submitted to the Arts Endowment's Office of General Counsel. When making a request for expedited processing of an administrative appeal, the request should be submitted to the Arts Endowment's FOIA Appeals Office per § 1148.8(a).

(3) A requester who seeks expedited processing must submit a statement, certified to be true and correct, explaining in detail the basis for making the request for expedited processing. For example, under paragraph (e)(1)(ii) of this section, a requester who is not a full-time member of the news media

must establish that the requester is a person whose primary professional activity or occupation is information dissemination, though it need not be the requester's sole occupation. Such a requester also must establish a particular urgency to inform the public about the government activity involved in the request—one that extends beyond the public's right to know about government activity generally. The existence of numerous articles published on a given subject can be helpful in establishing the requirement that there be an "urgency to inform" the public on the topic. As a matter of administrative discretion, the Arts Endowment may waive the formal certification requirement.

(4) The Arts Endowment will notify the requester within 10 calendar days of the receipt of a request for expedited processing of its decision whether to grant or deny expedited processing. If expedited processing is granted, the request must be given priority, placed in the processing track for expedited requests, and must be processed as soon as practicable. If a request for expedited processing is denied, the Arts Endowment will act on any appeal of that decision expeditiously.

§ 1148.6 How will I receive responses to my requests?

(a) *In general.* The Arts Endowment, to the extent practicable, will communicate with requesters having access to the internet electronically, such as email or web portal.

(b) *Acknowledgments of requests.* The Arts Endowment will acknowledge the request in writing and assign it an individualized tracking number if it will take longer than 10 working days to process. The Arts Endowment will include in the acknowledgment a brief description of the records sought to allow requesters to more easily keep track of their requests.

(c) *Estimated dates of completion and interim responses.* Upon request, the Arts Endowment will provide an estimated date by which the Arts Endowment expects to provide a response to the requester. If a request involves a voluminous amount of material, or searches in multiple locations, the Arts Endowment may provide interim re-

sponses, releasing the records on a rolling basis.

(d) *Grants of requests.* Once the Arts Endowment determines it will grant a request in full or in part, it will notify the requester in writing. The Arts Endowment will also inform the requester of any fees charged under § 1148.10 and will disclose the requested records to the requester promptly upon payment of any applicable fees. The Arts Endowment will inform the requester of the availability of its FOIA Public Liaison to offer assistance.

(e) *Adverse determinations of requests.* If the Arts Endowment makes an adverse determination denying a request in any respect, it will notify the requester of that determination in writing. Adverse determinations, or denials of requests, include decisions that: the requested record is exempt, in whole or in part; the request does not reasonably describe the records sought; the information requested is not a record subject to the FOIA; the requested record does not exist, cannot be located, or has been destroyed; or the requested record is not readily reproducible in the form or format sought by the requester. Adverse determinations also include denials involving fees or fee waiver matters or denials of requests for expedited processing.

(f) *Content of denial.* The denial will be signed by the Arts Endowment's General Counsel or designee and will include:

(1) The name and title or position of the person responsible for the denial;

(2) A brief statement of the reasons for the denial, including any FOIA exemption applied by the Arts Endowment in denying the request;

(3) An estimate of the volume of any records or information withheld, such as the number of pages or some other reasonable form of estimation, although such an estimate is not required if the volume is otherwise indicated by deletions marked on records that are disclosed in part or if providing an estimate would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption;

(4) A statement that:

(i) The denial may be appealed under § 1148.8(a);

(ii) That the requester has 90 days to file an appeal in order for it to be considered timely, and that the Arts Endowment will not process or consider appeals that were not filed within 90 days of the receipt of an adverse determination; and

(iii) A description of the appeal requirements; and

(5) A statement notifying the requester of the assistance available from the Arts Endowment's FOIA Public Liaison and the dispute resolution services offered by OGIS.

(g) *Use of record exclusions.* In the event that the Arts Endowment identifies records that may be subject to exclusion from the requirements of the FOIA pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(c), the Arts Endowment will confer with Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy (OIP), to obtain approval to apply the exclusion. The Arts Endowment, when invoking an exclusion will maintain an administrative record of the process of invocation and approval of the exclusion by OIP.

§ 1148.7 How does the Arts Endowment handle confidential commercial information?

(a) *Definitions.* The following definitions apply to this section.

(1) *Confidential commercial information* means commercial or financial information obtained by the Arts Endowment from a submitter that may be protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4).

(2) *Submitter* means any person or entity, including a corporation, State, or foreign government, but not including another Federal Government entity, that provides confidential commercial information, either directly or indirectly to the Federal Government.

(b) *Designation of confidential commercial information.* A submitter of confidential commercial information must use good faith efforts to designate by appropriate markings, at the time of submission, any portion of its submission that it considers to be protected from disclosure under Exemption 4. These designations expire 10 years after the date of the submission unless the submitter requests and provides

justification for a longer designation period.

(c) *When notice to submitters is required.* The following rules and procedures determine when the Arts Endowment will provide written notice to submitters of confidential commercial information that their information may be disclosed under FOIA.

(1) The Arts Endowment will promptly provide written notice to the submitter of confidential commercial information whenever records containing such information are requested under the FOIA if the Arts Endowment determines that it may be required to disclose the records, provided:

(i) The requested information has been designated in good faith by the submitter as information considered protected from disclosure under Exemption 4; or

(ii) The Arts Endowment has a reason to believe that the requested information may be protected from disclosure under Exemption 4, but has not yet determined whether the information is protected from disclosure.

(2) The notice will either describe the commercial information requested or include a copy of the requested records or portions of records containing the information. In cases involving a voluminous number of submitters, the Arts Endowment may post or publish a notice in a place or manner reasonably likely to inform the submitters of the proposed disclosure, instead of sending individual notifications.

(d) *Exceptions to submitter notice requirements.* The notice requirements of this section do not apply if:

(1) The Arts Endowment determines that the information is exempt under the FOIA, and therefore will not be disclosed;

(2) The information has been lawfully published or has been officially made available to the public;

(3) Disclosure of the information is required by a statute other than the FOIA or by a regulation issued in accordance with the requirements of Executive Order 12600 of June 23, 1987; or

(4) The designation made by the submitter under paragraph (b) of this section appears obviously frivolous. In such case, the Arts Endowment will give the submitter written notice of

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any final decision to disclose the information within a reasonable number of days prior to a specified disclosure date.

(e) *Opportunity to object to disclosure.* A submitter will have the opportunity to object to disclosure of information under FOIA.

(1) The Arts Endowment will specify a reasonable time period within which the submitter must respond to the notice referenced in paragraph (c) of this section.

(2) If a submitter has any objections to disclosure, it must provide the Arts Endowment a detailed written statement that specifies all grounds for withholding the particular information under any exemption of the FOIA. In order to rely on Exemption 4 as basis for nondisclosure, the submitter must explain why the information constitutes a trade secret or commercial or financial information that is confidential.

(3) A submitter who fails to respond within the time period specified in paragraph (e)(1) of this section will be considered to have no objection to disclosure of the information. The Arts Endowment is not required to consider any information received after the date of any disclosure decision. Any information provided by a submitter under this part may itself be subject to disclosure under the FOIA.

(f) *Analysis of objections.* The Arts Endowment must consider a submitter's objections and specific grounds for nondisclosure in deciding whether to disclose the requested information.

(g) *Notice of intent to disclose.* Whenever the Arts Endowment decides to disclose information over the objection of a submitter, the Arts Endowment will provide the submitter written notice, which will include:

(1) A statement of the reasons why each of the submitter's disclosure objections was not sustained;

(2) A description of the information to be disclosed or copies of the records as the Arts Endowment intends to release them; and

(3) A specified disclosure date, which will be a reasonable time after the notice.

(h) *Notice of FOIA lawsuit.* Whenever a requester files a lawsuit seeking to

compel the disclosure of confidential commercial information, the Arts Endowment will promptly notify the submitter.

(i) *Requester notification.* The Arts Endowment will notify the requester whenever it provides the submitter with notice and an opportunity to object to disclosure; whenever it notifies the submitter of its intent to disclose the requested information; and whenever a submitter files a lawsuit to prevent the disclosure of the information.

§ 1148.8 How can I appeal a denial of my request?

(a) *Requirements for making an appeal.* A requester may appeal any adverse determinations to the Arts Endowment's office designated to receive FOIA appeals ("FOIA Appeals Office"). Examples of adverse determinations are provided in § 1148.6(e). Requesters can submit appeals by mail by writing to Arts Endowment Chairman, c/o Office of General Counsel, National Endowment for the Arts, 400 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20506, or online in accordance with instructions on the Arts Endowment's website (<https://www.arts.gov/freedom-information-act-guide>). The requester must make the appeal in writing and to be considered timely it must be postmarked, or in the case of electronic submissions, transmitted, within 90 calendar days after the date of the adverse determination. The appeal should clearly identify the Arts Endowment's determination that is being appealed and the assigned request number. To facilitate handling, the requester should mark both the appeal letter and envelope, or subject line of the electronic transmission, "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

(b) *Adjudication of appeals.* (1) The Arts Endowment's Chairperson or his/her designee will act on behalf of the Arts Endowment's Chief FOIA Officer on all appeals under this section.

(2) An appeal ordinarily will not be adjudicated if the request becomes a matter of FOIA litigation.

(c) *Decisions on appeals.* The Arts Endowment will provide its decision on an

appeal in writing. A decision that upholds the Arts Endowment's determination in whole or in part will contain a statement that identifies the reasons for its decision, including any FOIA exemptions applied. The decision will provide the requester with notification of the statutory right to file a lawsuit and will inform the requester of the dispute resolution services offered by the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) of the National Archives and Records Administration as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. If the Arts Endowment's decision is remanded or modified on appeal, the Arts Endowment will notify the requester of that determination in writing. The Arts Endowment will then further process the request in accordance with that appeal determination and will respond directly to the requester.

(d) *Engaging in dispute resolution services provided by OGIS.* Dispute resolution is a voluntary process. If the Arts Endowment agrees to participate in the dispute resolution services provided by OGIS, it will actively engage as a partner to the process in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

(e) *When appeal is required.* Before seeking review by a court of the Arts Endowment's adverse determination, a requester generally must first submit a timely administrative appeal.

(f) *Timing of appeal.* After receiving the Arts Endowment's adverse determination, a requester has 90 calendar days to file an appeal in order for it to be considered timely. The Arts Endowment will not process or consider appeals that were not filed within 90 calendar days of the date of an adverse determination.

§ 1148.9 What are the Arts Endowment policies regarding preservation of records?

The Arts Endowment will preserve all correspondence pertaining to the requests that it receives under this part, as well as copies of all requested records, until disposition or destruction is authorized pursuant to title 44 of the United States Code or the General Records Schedule 4.2 of the National Archives and Records Administration. The Arts Endowment will not

dispose of or destroy records while they are the subject of a pending request, appeal, or lawsuit under the FOIA.

§ 1148.10 How will fees be charged?

(a) *In general.* (1) The Arts Endowment will charge for processing requests under the FOIA in accordance with the provisions of this section and with the OMB Guidelines. For purposes of assessing fees, the FOIA establishes three categories of requesters:

- (i) Commercial use requesters;
- (ii) Non-commercial scientific or educational institutions or news media requesters; and
- (iii) All other requesters.

(2) Different fees are assessed depending on the category. Requesters may seek a fee waiver. The Arts Endowment will consider requests for fee waiver in accordance with the requirements in paragraph (k) of this section. To resolve any fee issues that arise under this section, the Arts Endowment may contact a requester for additional information. The Arts Endowment will ensure that searches, review, and duplication are conducted in the most efficient and the least expensive manner. The Arts Endowment ordinarily will collect all applicable fees before sending copies of records to a requester. Requesters must pay fees by check or money order made payable to the Treasury of the United States, or by another method as determined by the Arts Endowment.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section:

(1) *Commercial use request* is a request that asks for information for a use or a purpose that furthers a commercial, trade, or profit interest, which can include furthering those interests through litigation. The Arts Endowment's decision to place a requester in the commercial use category will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the requester's intended use of the information. The Arts Endowment will notify requesters of their placement in this category.

(2) *Direct costs* are those expenses that the Arts Endowment incurs in searching for and duplicating (and, in the case of commercial use requests, reviewing) records in order to respond to a FOIA request. For example, direct

costs include the salary of the employee performing the work (*i.e.*, the basic rate of pay for the employee, plus 16 percent of that rate to cover benefits) and the cost of operating computers and other electronic equipment, such as photocopiers and scanners. Direct costs do not include overhead expenses such as the costs of space, and of heating or lighting a facility.

(3) *Duplication* is reproducing a copy of a record, or of the information contained in it, necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Copies can take the form of paper, audiovisual materials, or electronic records, among others.

(4) *Educational institution* is any school that operates a program of scholarly research. A requester in this fee category must show that the request is made in connection with his or her role at the educational institution. The Arts Endowment may seek verification from the requester that the request is in furtherance of scholarly research and the Arts Endowment will advise requesters of their placement in this category.

(i) *Example 1.* A request from a professor of architecture at a university for records relating to Arts Endowment grants related to architecture, written on letterhead of the Department of Geology, would be presumed to be from an educational institution.

(ii) *Example 2.* A request from the same professor of architecture seeking translation grant information from the Arts Endowment in furtherance of a murder mystery he is writing would not be presumed to be an institutional request, regardless of whether it was written on institutional stationery.

(iii) *Example 3.* A student who makes a request in furtherance of their coursework or other school-sponsored activities and provides a copy of a course syllabus or other reasonable documentation to indicate the research purpose for the request, would qualify as part of this fee category.

(5) *Noncommercial scientific institution* is an institution that is not operated on a “commercial” basis, as defined in paragraph (b)(1) of this section and that is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or in-

dustry. A requester in this category must show that the request is authorized by and is made under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are sought to further scientific research and are not for a commercial use. The Arts Endowment will advise requesters of their placement in this category.

(6) *Representative of the news media* is any person or entity that gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience. The term “news” means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. Examples of news media entities include television or radio stations that broadcast “news” to the public at large and publishers of periodicals that disseminate “news” and make their products available through a variety of means to the general public, including news organizations that disseminate solely on the internet. A request for records supporting the news-dissemination function of the requester will not be considered to be for a commercial use. “Freelance” journalists who demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through a news media entity will be considered as a representative of the news media. A publishing contract would provide the clearest evidence that publication is expected; however, the Arts Endowment may also consider a requester’s past publication record in making this determination. The Arts Endowment will advise requesters of their placement in this category.

(7) *Review* is the examination of a record located in response to a request in order to determine whether any portion of it is exempt from disclosure. Review time includes processing any record for disclosure, such as doing all that is necessary to prepare the record for disclosure, including the process of redacting the record and marking the appropriate exemptions. Review costs are properly charged even if a record ultimately is not disclosed. Review

time also includes time spent both obtaining and considering any formal objection to disclosure made by a confidential commercial information submitter under § 1148.7, but it does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(8) *Search* is the process of looking for and retrieving records or information responsive to a request. Search time includes page-by-page or line-by-line identification of information within records and the reasonable efforts expended to locate and retrieve information from electronic records.

(c) *Charging fees.* In responding to FOIA requests, the Arts Endowment will charge the following fees unless a waiver or reduction of fees has been granted under paragraph (k) of this section. Because the fee amounts provided in paragraphs (c)(1) through (3) of this section already account for the direct costs associated with a given fee type, the Arts Endowment will not add any additional costs to charges calculated under this section.

(1) *Searches.* The following fee policies apply to searches:

(i) Requests made by educational institutions, noncommercial scientific institutions, or representatives of the news media are not subject to search fees. The Arts Endowment will charge search fees for all other requesters, subject to the restrictions of paragraph (d) of this section. The Arts Endowment may properly charge for time spent searching even if the Arts Endowment does not locate any responsive records or if the Arts Endowment determines that the records are entirely exempt from disclosure.

(ii) For manual searches, the fee charged will be the salary rate or rates of the employee or employees conducting the search. For computer searches, the fee charged will be the actual direct cost of providing the service, including the salary rate or rates of the operator(s) or programmer(s) conducting the search. The salary rate is calculated as the particular employee's basic pay plus 16.1 percent. The Arts Endowment may charge fees even if the documents are determined to be exempt from disclosure or cannot be located.

(iii) The Arts Endowment will charge the direct costs associated with conducting any search that requires the creation of a new computer program to locate the requested records. The Arts Endowment will notify the requester of the costs associated with creating such a program, and the requester must agree to pay the associated costs before the costs may be incurred.

(iv) For requests that require the retrieval of records stored by the Arts Endowment at a Federal records center operated by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Arts Endowment will charge additional costs in accordance with the Transactional Billing Rate Schedule established by NARA.

(2) *Duplication.* The Arts Endowment will charge duplication fees to all requesters, subject to the restrictions of paragraph (d) of this section. The Arts Endowment will honor a requester's preference for receiving a record in a particular form or format where the Arts Endowment can readily reproduce it in the form or format requested. Where photocopies are supplied, the Arts Endowment will provide one copy per request at the cost of \$.10 per single sided page, and \$.20 per double sided page. For copies of records produced on tapes, disks, or other media, the Arts Endowment will charge the direct costs of producing the copy, including operator time. Where paper documents must be scanned in order to comply with a requester's preference to receive the records in an electronic format, the requester must also pay the direct costs associated with scanning those materials. For other forms of duplication, the Arts Endowment will charge the direct costs.

(3) *Review.* The Arts Endowment will charge review fees to requesters who make commercial use requests. Review fees will be assessed in connection with the initial review of the record, *i.e.*, the review conducted by the Arts Endowment to determine whether an exemption applies to a particular record or portion of a record. No charge will be made for review at the administrative appeal stage of exemptions applied at the initial review stage. However, if a particular exemption is deemed to no longer apply, any costs associated with

the Arts Endowment's re-review of the records in order to consider the use of other exemptions may be assessed as review fees. Review fees will be charged at the same rates as those charged for a search under paragraph (c)(1)(ii) of this section.

(d) *Restrictions on charging fees.* The Arts Endowment will adhere to the following restrictions regarding fees it charges:

(1) When the Arts Endowment determines that a requester is an educational institution, non-commercial scientific institution, or representative of the news media, and the records are not sought for commercial use, it will not charge search fees.

(2) If the Arts Endowment fails to comply with the FOIA's time limits in which to respond to a request, it will not charge search fees, or, in the instances of requests from requesters described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, may not charge duplication fees, except as described in paragraphs (d)(3) through (5) of this section.

(3) If the Arts Endowment has determined that unusual circumstances as defined by the FOIA apply and the Arts Endowment provided timely written notice to the requester in accordance with the FOIA, a failure to comply with the time limit shall be excused for an additional 10 working days.

(4) If the Arts Endowment has determined that unusual circumstances, as defined by the FOIA, apply and more than 5,000 pages are necessary to respond to the request, the Arts Endowment may charge search fees, or, in the case of requesters described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, may charge duplication fees, if the following steps are taken:

(i) The Arts Endowment provided timely written notice of unusual circumstances to the requester in accordance with the FOIA; and

(ii) The Arts Endowment discussed with the requester via written mail, email, or telephone (or made not less than three good-faith attempts to do so) how the requester could effectively limit the scope of the request in accordance with 5. U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B)(ii). If this exception is satisfied, the Arts Endowment may charge all applicable

fees incurred in the processing of the request.

(5) If a court has determined that exceptional circumstances exist, as defined by the FOIA, a failure to comply with the time limits shall be excused for the length of time provided by the court order.

(6) No search or review fees will be charged for a quarter-hour period unless more than half of that period is required for search or review.

(7) Except for requesters seeking records for a commercial use, the Arts Endowment will provide without charge:

(i) The first 100 pages of duplication (or the cost equivalent for other media); and

(ii) The first two hours of search.

(8) No fee will be charged when the total fee, after deducting the 100 free pages (or its cost equivalent) and the first two hours of search, is equal to or less than \$25.

(e) *Notice of anticipated fees in excess of \$25.00.* The following procedures apply when the Arts Endowment anticipates fees to be in excess of \$25.00.

(1) When the Arts Endowment determines or estimates that the fees to be assessed in accordance with this section will exceed \$25.00, the Arts Endowment will notify the requester of the actual or estimated amount of the fees, including a breakdown of the fees for search, review or duplication, unless the requester has indicated a willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. If only a portion of the fee can be estimated readily, the Arts Endowment will advise the requester accordingly. If the request is not for non-commercial use, the notice will specify that the requester is entitled to the statutory entitlements of 100 pages of duplication at no charge and, if the requester is charged search fees, two hours of search time at no charge, and will advise the requester whether those entitlements have been provided.

(2) If the Arts Endowment notifies the requester that the actual or estimated fees are in excess of \$25.00, the request will not be considered received and further work will not be completed until the requester commits in writing to pay the actual or estimated total fee, or designates some amount of fees

the requester is willing to pay, or in the case of a noncommercial use requester who has not yet been provided with the requester's statutory entitlements, designates that the requester seeks only that which can be provided by the statutory entitlements. The requester must provide the commitment or designation in writing, and must, when applicable, designate an exact dollar amount the requester is willing to pay. The Arts Endowment is not required to accept payments in installments.

(3) If the requester has indicated a willingness to pay some designated amount of fees, but the Arts Endowment estimates that the total fee will exceed that amount, the Arts Endowment will toll the processing of the request when it notifies the requester of the estimated fees in excess of the amount the requester has indicated a willingness to pay. The Arts Endowment will inquire whether the requester wishes to revise the amount of fees the requester is willing to pay or modify the request. Once the requester responds, the time to respond will resume from where it was at the date of the notification.

(4) The Arts Endowment will make available its FOIA Public Liaison or other designated FOIA contact to assist any requester in reformulating a request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost.

(f) *Charges for other services.* Although not required to provide special services, if the Arts Endowment chooses to do so as a matter of administrative discretion, the direct costs of providing the service will be charged. Examples of such services include certifying that records are true copies, providing multiple copies of the same document, or sending records by means other than first class mail.

(g) *Charging interest.* The Arts Endowment may charge interest on any unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the date of billing the requester. Interest charges will be assessed at the rate provided in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and will accrue from the billing date until payment is received by the Arts Endowment. The Arts Endowment will follow the provisions of the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97-365, 96

Stat. 1749), as amended, and its administrative procedures, including the use of consumer reporting agencies, collection agencies, and offset.

(h) *Aggregating requests.* When the Arts Endowment reasonably believes that a requester or a group of requesters acting in concert is attempting to divide a single request into a series of requests for the purpose of avoiding fees, the Arts Endowment may aggregate those requests and charge accordingly. The Arts Endowment may presume that multiple requests of this type made within a 30 calendar day period have been made in order to avoid fees. For requests separated by a longer period, the Arts Endowment will aggregate them only where there is a reasonable basis for determining that aggregation is warranted in view of all the circumstances involved. Multiple requests involving unrelated matters cannot be aggregated.

(i) *Advance payments.* The following policies and procedures apply to advanced payments of fees:

(1) For requests other than those described in paragraph (i)(2) or (3) of this section, the Arts Endowment will not require the requester to make an advance payment before work is commenced or continued on a request. Payment owed for work already completed (*i.e.*, payment before copies are sent to a requester) is not an advance payment.

(2) When the Arts Endowment determines or estimates that a total fee to be charged under this section will exceed \$250.00, it may require that the requester make an advance payment up to the amount of the entire anticipated fee before beginning to process the request. The Arts Endowment may elect to process the request prior to collecting fees when it receives a satisfactory assurance of full payment from a requester with a history of prompt payment.

(3) Where a requester has previously failed to pay a properly charged FOIA fee to any agency within 30 calendar days of the billing date, the Arts Endowment may require that the requester pay the full amount due, plus any applicable interest on that prior request, and the Arts Endowment may

require that the requester make an advance payment of the full amount of any anticipated fee before the Arts Endowment begins to process a new request or continues to process a pending request or any pending appeal. Where the Arts Endowment has a reasonable basis to believe that a requester has misrepresented the requester's identity in order to avoid paying outstanding fees, it may require that the requester provide proof of identity.

(4) In cases in which the Arts Endowment requires advance payment, the request will not be considered received and further work will not be completed until the required payment is received. If the requester does not pay the advance payment within 30 calendar days after the date of the Arts Endowment's fee determination, the request will be closed.

(j) *Other statutes specifically providing for fees.* The fee schedule of this section does not apply to fees charged under any statute that specifically requires the Arts Endowment to set and collect fees for particular types of records. In instances where records responsive to a request are subject to a statutorily-based fee schedule program, the Arts Endowment will inform the requester of the contact information for that program.

(k) *Requirements for waiver or reduction of fees.* The following policies and procedures apply to fee waivers or reductions of fees.

(1) Requesters may seek a waiver of fees by submitting a written application demonstrating how disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(2) The Arts Endowment will furnish records responsive to a request without charge or at a reduced rate when it determines, based on all available information, that the factors described in paragraphs (k)(2)(i) through (iii) of this section are satisfied:

(i) Disclosure of the requested information would shed light on the operations or activities of the government. The subject of the request must con-

cern identifiable operations or activities of the Federal Government with a connection that is direct and clear, not remote or attenuated.

(ii) Disclosure of the requested information is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of those operations or activities. This factor is satisfied when the following criteria are met:

(A) Disclosure of the requested records must be meaningfully informative about government operations or activities. The disclosure of information that already is in the public domain, in either the same or a substantially identical form, would not be meaningfully informative if nothing new would be added to the public's understanding.

(B) The disclosure must contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester. A requester's expertise in the subject area as well as the requester's ability and intention to effectively convey information to the public must be considered. The Arts Endowment will presume that a representative of the news media will satisfy this consideration.

(iii) The disclosure must not be primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. To determine whether disclosure of the requested information is primarily in the commercial interest of the requester, the Arts Endowment will consider the following criteria:

(A) The Arts Endowment will identify whether the requester has any commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure. A commercial interest includes any commercial, trade, or profit interest. Requesters will be given an opportunity to provide explanatory information regarding this consideration.

(B) If there is an identified commercial interest, the Arts Endowment will determine whether that is the primary interest furthered by the request. A waiver or reduction of fees is justified when the requirements of paragraphs (k)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section are satisfied and any commercial interest is not the primary interest furthered by the request. The Arts Endowment ordinarily will presume that when a news

media requester has satisfied the factors in paragraphs (k)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section, the request is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. Disclosure to data brokers or others who merely compile and market government information for direct economic return will not be presumed to primarily serve the public interest.

(3) Where only some of the records to be released satisfy the requirements for a waiver of fees, a waiver will be granted for those records.

(4) Requests for a waiver or reduction of fees should be made when the request is first submitted to the Arts Endowment and should address the criteria referenced in paragraphs (k)(1) through (3) of this section. A requester may submit a fee waiver request at a later time so long as the underlying record request is pending or on administrative appeal. When a requester who has committed to pay fees subsequently asks for a waiver of those fees and that waiver is denied, the requester must pay any costs incurred up to the date the fee waiver request was received.

[84 FR 6345, Feb. 27, 2019; 84 FR 8003, Mar. 6, 2019]

§ 1148.11 What other rules apply to Arts Endowment FOIA requests?

Nothing in this part shall be construed to entitle any person, as of right, to any service or to the disclosure of any record to which such person is not entitled under the FOIA.

PART 1149—PROGRAM FRAUD CIVIL REMEDIES ACT REGULATIONS

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